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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BEIJING 001989

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PARM](#) [PTER](#) [MOPS](#) [MARR](#) [EAID](#) [CH](#) [IN](#)
SUBJECT: PRC: INDIAN ACTIONS ON ARUNACHAL PRADESH DESIGNED
TO PRESSURE CHINA, SAY SCHOLARS

REF: A. BEIJING 1698
[1](#)B. BEIJING 1844
[1](#)C. 08 BEIJING 3744

Classified By: Acting Political Minister Counselor Ben Moeling for reasons 1.4 (B/D).

Summary

[1](#)1. (C) Chinese scholars believe the media-hyped controversies over recent Indian troop movements near the disputed province of Arunachal Pradesh and the province's inclusion in the Asia Development Bank's Country Strategy for India reflect India's desire to pressure China to recognize India's territorial claims to Arunachal Pradesh. Scholars said that though bilateral border talks would continue, China's position on its claims to Dawang (Tawang) district in Arunachal Pradesh had hardened, and given India's recent actions, scholars believed chances for a successful resolution of the border dispute in the near future were bleak. End summary.

[1](#)2. (SBU) Tensions between China and India increased recently due to reports of Indian troop movements and deployment of advanced Sukhoi-30MKi aircraft close to Arunachal Pradesh, a region China claimed as part of Tibet. June 11 editorials in both Chinese and English-language Communist Party-controlled official newspapers had excoriated India for its military moves, declaring that "India can't compete with China (in) international influence, overall national power and economic scale." The Communist Party's Global Times also published an online survey that found 90 percent of Chinese netizens found India's military move a threat to China. While MFA Spokesperson Qin Gang stated on June 11 that China was "willing to pursue a fair and reasonable solution through negotiations," he also called Indian accusations of PLA intrusions into India "unacceptable" and urged the "relevant figures and media to take a responsible attitude."

[1](#)3. (SBU) Adding to bilateral tensions were PRC objections to the inclusion in the Asia Development Bank (ADB) Country Partnership Strategy for India of a watershed protection project in Arunachal Pradesh. Chinese media quoted MFA Spokesperson Qin June 18 saying "China expresses its strong dissatisfaction over (the ADB strategy)," while a June 19 editorial in the English-language version of the Communist Party-controlled China Daily labeled the ADB move "irritating."

[1](#)4. (C) The MFA reported June 24 (ref B) that PRC President Hu Jintao and Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh had not discussed the border dispute at the June 16 SCO and BRIC Summits in Yekaterinburg, and Indian Embassy contacts, while noting the Chinese and Indian media editorial sparring, affirmed to PolOff July 7 that the Chinese government had not

formally raised concerns to them about Indian military moves.

Despite the limited direct government-to-government communications about these disputes, in recent conversations with Chinese scholars that also touched on Pakistan and Afghanistan (septel), our contacts suggested the media-hyped controversies reflected real tensions in bilateral relations.

Suspicious of Indian Military Build-up

15. (C) China Academy of Social Sciences (CASS) scholar Ye Hailin suggested to PolOff July 1 that Indian military moves near the disputed region of Arunachal Pradesh indicated India's growing impatience on resolving the long-standing border dispute with China. He claimed that India already enjoyed a three to one advantage in military numerical strength over China and that China was "puzzled" by India's move to increase its advantage. In addition, Ye argued that the plateau terrain of Arunachal Pradesh provided India a tactical military advantage over Chinese forces positioned in more mountainous areas to the north. Ye commented that he understood the domestic political need for the new Congress Party government in India to show it could stand up to China, but he said that India's constant "complaining" about Chinese incursions and designs for regional dominance was "a sign of a not very powerful country," Ye said, likening India's current status to that of China's 50 year ago.

16. (C) Beijing University South Asia scholar Han Hua told PolOff July 8 that China discounted Indian claims that the

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troop movements were a response to infrastructure developments on the Chinese side of the border. She added that India's perception of a diminished military threat from Pakistan, which she attributed to U.S. involvement in South Asia, facilitated the Indian military build-up near Arunachal Pradesh.

ADB Inclusion Bolsters India Territorial Claim

17. (C) CICIR South Asia scholar Hu Shisheng told PolOff July 2 that China had objected to the ADB Country Strategy because inclusion of Arunachal Pradesh in the program strategy of a multilateral organization such as ADB, would bolster India's claims to the disputed region. He insisted that China was not opposed to developing the region, but that such development should take place under a different aegis, citing the 1999 Kunming Initiative (a program for developing transportation and trade links between South and Southeast Asia) as an example. Beijing University's Han suggested that while Arunachal Pradesh's inclusion in the ADB program represented a win for Indian diplomacy, the move would have little impact on the border dispute.

Border Talks to Continue, but Not Reach Resolution

18. (C) "Another 13 rounds of negotiations wouldn't work," CASS' Ye said, referring to the Special Representative mechanism initiated by China and India in 2003 to address the border dispute. Led by Chinese State Councilor Dai Bingguo and Indian National Security Advisor M.K. Narayanan, the two sides completed the 12th round of talks in September 2008 without resolution, though Indian Embassy contacts confirmed both sides were seeking a 13th round of talks later in 2009.

19. (C) CICIR's Hu was equally pessimistic about prospects to resolve the dispute, suggesting that both sides' positions appeared irreconcilable. As noted in Ref C, China had stepped back from the "West for East" bargain (entailing India's acceptance of China's control of Aksai Chin in the west and China's acceptance of India's control of Arunachal Pradesh) PRC Premier Zhou Enlai originally offered to India

in the late 1950s and later repeated by Deng Xiaoping in 1988, and now insisted on its claim to Dawang (Tawang) district (approximately half of Arunachal Pradesh). He observed that Dawang's ties to Tibetan Buddhism had sharpened its cultural and historical resonance for China, and noted that China carries a lingering sense of betrayal about Dawang, given that India gained control of the region through its forcible expulsion of Tibetan authorities in 1951, when both countries were establishing their independence from colonial powers and China was "distracted by the Korean War." He further added that PRC official propaganda had inculcated into the Chinese public that Dawang was "core territory" of China and therefore Chinese leadership feared being perceived as "selling out" Chinese territory.

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